

NintendoAGE eZine

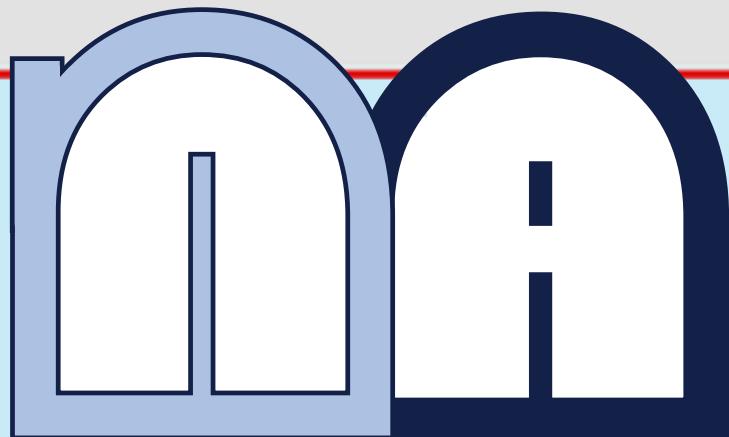
IN THIS ISSUE

More Homebrews

These things are taking off!

Prototypes

Don't be fooled



Volume 2 Issue 5
June 2008

Silent Service

Wait, someone likes this game?



Cover art by Mr. Gimmick

INTRODUCING
THE **NintendoAGE.com**
PRICE GUIDE

DreamTR's Diaries of a **DIABOLICAL MADMAN**

Spotting a Genuine Proto

Article by Jason Wilson

Well, the next issue ended up being three issues later than I thought! We left off with a bit of prototype talk. Unless you've been living under a rock, you know that my library of prototypes is one of the parts of my video game collection of which I am most proud. Prototype collecting is extremely niche, as most of the old-school collectors have stopped going after prototypes - and there has not been a rebirth of collector interest on these highly volatile pieces of software. Most likely there is just a lack of educated in-



DreamTR

formation on prototypes. Many of them look like common homemade repos to the untrained eye, so that potential collections could not tell the difference between one that is real, and one that was reproduced.

Since there is a significant amount of time involved burning EPROMS and wiring them correctly to a compatible board, it is highly unlikely someone would be faking prototypes of commercially released games due to the insignificant value increase if one is sold. At first glance, a prototype may or may not have a label, it may have marker or pen marks on the face of the game, and usually, but not always, has the back label completely torn off with no residue as if there had never been a label there in the first place.

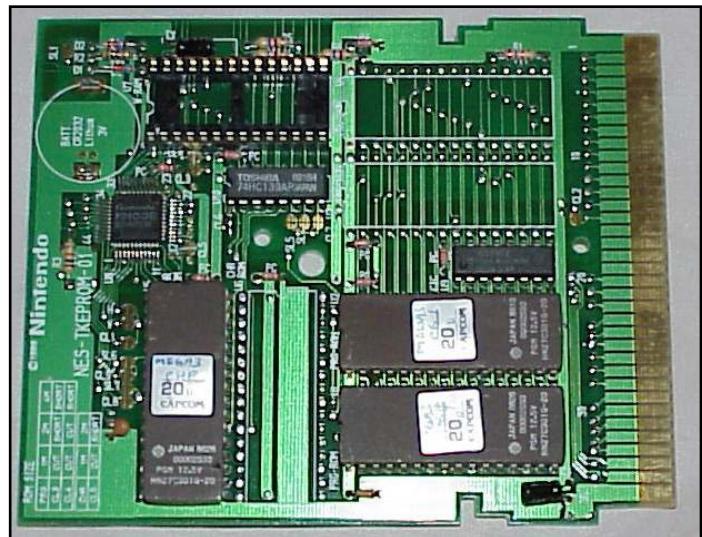
The weight of a prototype is at least the same, and in some instances, greater than the weight of a Gyromite cartridge with Famicom-to-NES converter inside (about 4.3oz, compared to the usual 3.5oz-3.6oz). This is usually the most telling sign that a random game without a proper label that you found at a flea market or garage sale could be a prototype.

Opening one up and finding EPROMS on the

board is a good sign. If there are wires coming out of each section of the EPROM, and it is on a special "long" EPROM board (usually MMC1 or MMC3 boards that take up the entire inside of the cartridge) you have yourself a bonafide prototype!

Some instances of "fake" prototypes are: EPROMS on boards with no company name on it, (no Nintendo more than likely means, not real), boards with ROM chips instead of EPROMS, (only a couple of exceptions have been made, Crystalis being one of them, found with a long TKEPROT board and ROM chips that contained different data than the released version) and games with nice, new computer printed labels with games that look too good to be true. The Zelda III fake prototype had a completely fake label, but used the insides of an Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Heroes of the Lance prototype board.

With this being said, there will be an addition to the NintendoAGE site soon with information regarding lots of long lost "mystery" prototypes that have never seen the light of day, released and unreleased. Stay tuned!



Top Left: As you can see, there is no adhesive residue where a back label would normally be.

Top Right: Finding EPROMs when opening the case is a very good thing, if it says Nintendo.

Bottom Right:
Sample label.



Bottom Left: Fake
Zelda III Proto.



International Cricket

Article by James Todd

International Cricket is one of the 2 sports titles released exclusively in Australia by Laser Beam (developed by Beam Software). It is the only cricket title to be released on the NES, and pro-



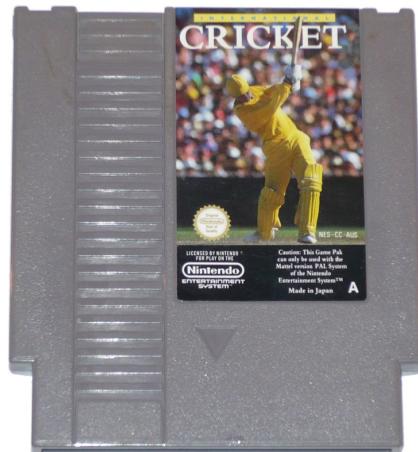
vided the armchair fans of cricket in Australia with their first taste of this popular game on any console. This article takes a look at some basic concepts of cricket, and whether

International Cricket provides an enjoyable incarnation of the game.

So What is Cricket?

(Quoted from *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*)

Cricket is a game played between two teams, generally of 11 members each. In essence, it is single combat, in which an individual batsman does battle against an individual bowler, who has helpers known as fielders. The bowler propels the ball with a straight arm from one end of the 22-yard pitch in an attempt to dismiss the batsman by hitting a target known as the wicket at the other end, or by causing the batsman to hit the ball into the air into a fielder's grasp, or by inducing one of a number of other indiscretions. The batsman attempts to defend the wicket with the bat and to score runs – the currency of the game – by striking the ball to the field boundary, or far enough from the fielders to allow the batsman to run to the other end of the pitch before



the ball can be returned. At least two bowlers must take turns, from alternating ends; also, there are always two batsmen on the field, each to take a turn as required. When all but one of the batting team have been dismissed – or after an agreed period – the teams' roles are reversed. After all the players required to bat on both sides have done so either once or twice (which can take from a few hours to five days) the total number of runs accumulated determines the winner. But sometimes there isn't one.

Some key terminology

Over: A bowler gets to bowl 6 consecutive balls which is called an 'Over'. A typical One Day International match consists of 50 overs per side.

Scoring: The score is represented as the number of people out (wickets) and the total number of runs in the form wickets / runs. For example 5 / 78 is represents 5 people out and 78 runs scored. When 10 are out, the whole team is out.

Run Rate: How many runs have been scored per over.

Reqd Rate: With the number of overs remaining, how many runs do you need to score per over to win.

Interesting fact - Ducks

If a batsmen gets out for 0 runs, he is said to be out for a duck. This is apparently named after the fact a 0 looks like a ducks egg.

How does International cricket fare?

So now you understand a few of the rules of the sport, does International Cricket on the NES provide an accurate representation of the game? The answer, like most cricket games, is the balance just isn't there to provide an accurate final score. Usually the learning curve in these games for batting is a lot higher than bowling (like baseball games), so while a nor-



mal score may be around 200-250 in real life, scores in International Cricket are usually a lot closer to 50. The controls are also quite clunky in the fielding, so it can be painful trying to run someone out, or even just get the bowler to bowl the next ball! When all is said and done though, this can be a fun game to play with a friend once you both master a few of the controls. If there is a skill difference between players there will be massive difference on the scoreboard.

I commend Beam's effort on releasing a cricket game for the NES, it would have been great to see some competition in the market to see a better game released but alas this concept was a bit too late in the NES's life. While the Aus-



tralian market was limited, it is interesting to note that they never got around to releasing this game in the other cricket playing NES market of the UK which would have surely boosted their sales considerably.

Their sequel for the SNES – Super International Cricket – proved to be quite popular as the newer technology of the NES improved the graphics quite considerably, and made the gameplay a lot smoother. Who could forget the ability to constantly appeal (howzat!) when fielding with the great digitized voices?

The RetroZone Review

Super NeSnake 2

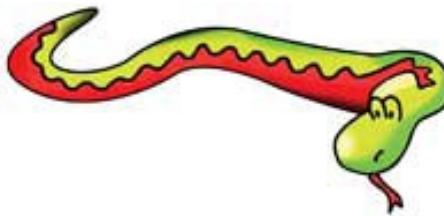
Article by Jason Smith

Bunnyboy at RetroZone has done it again folks! He has cranked out another killer NES homebrew, Super NeSnake 2. I have had the privilege of beta testing this one and in this humble authors opinion, it is one of, if not the best NES homebrew to date. It has a great soundtrack that is catchy, yet builds tension as you have to make those tight turns. The game play is stellar, and has very precise controls that become mandatory as you get into the later levels.

Brief History

NeSnake is a pretty well known game, and I suspect many of you will recognize it right away. It is included on lots of cell phones and is simply called Snake. You might also recognize it from the old Q-basic demo called Nibbles. The premise of the game is simple—you collect numbers (1-9) while avoiding hitting the walls, obstacles and arrows on screen. Your snake grows after each number you eat, or when you eat fruit. At first, the length doesn't matter too much. However, as the speed and level progress you have to be very mindful of the route you take so you don't run into your tail. After you collect the 9th number you progress to the next level. As with most puzzle games, the difficulty progressively increases as you level up.

The first NeSnake version 2003 was for the 2004 Mini-game Competition (<http://www.ffd2.com/minigame/>) and was one of only 4 NES entries into the competition of over 40 games. The competition had 3 categories, 1K, 2K, and 4K being the maximum file size (for PRG and CHR both). Most of the entries were for the Atari or Commodore 64 consoles. The original NeSnake was pretty basic, but still had a solid game engine. The graphics and sound were pretty fundamental but the game was very addictive. Unfortunately the original source code for the game has been lost to time, never to be found again. It is still playable in ROM format though (more later).



After the success and popularity of NeSnake, Matrixz decided to make a more complete game and beef it up a bit. So around October 2004 he started work on NeSnake 2—a full sized game that wasn't stuck with the 4k limitations of the competition. It had several new modes and different aspects of play. On 1 player mode it had practice/quest modes, on 2 player mode, it had player and comp modes. NeSnake 2 also introduced a simple 4 character password system to unlock the different modes of difficulty. He finished the game later in 2004 and released the ROM's publicly. Some of the graphics and music were outsourced by Matrixz, so check the in-game credits. He was generous enough to answer a few questions for us about the process:

[NGD]: Hi, thanks for taking the time to answer a few questions for the monthly eZine. We all really appreciate it.

[Matrixz]: You're welcome.

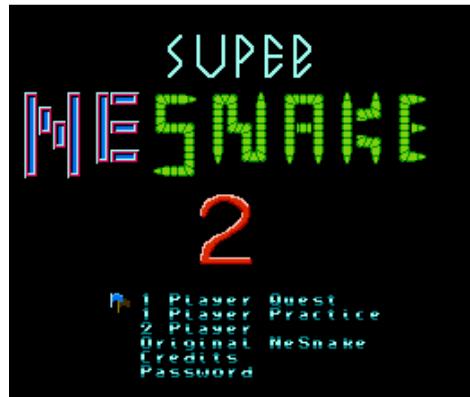
[NGD]: What brought about the creation of the original NeSnake? In other words, what made you want to put the game on the NES console?

[Matrixz]: NeSnake was actually an entry in the "2004 MiniGame Compo". I wanted to do something for the NES console. Trying to think of any style of game to try make a minigame of, I ended up aiming for a Snake game based

on Microsoft's Nibbles demonstration program for QBasic. :) It placed 20th in the 4K category.

[NGD]: How long after NeSnake did you start working on NeSnake 2? What were some of the problems you experienced as you coded the new game?

[Matrixz]: Not very long after. Sometime af-



ter October 2004. Some things in development that took more work were fixing random background-graphics glitches, and I think getting the computer AI to work right. I had to get really theoretic.

[NGD]: How did it come about that you and bunnyboy teamed up to have Super NeSnake 2 as a new NES homebrew game?

[Matrixz]: Bunnyboy had the whole idea behind that. I was surprised to hear about him wanting to produce carts of my game. But I am really a fan of the idea of publishing homebrew NES games that way, it's inspiring.

[NGD]: Are you working on any other NES related projects right now, or do you plan on starting any up in the future?

[Matrixz]: Not really. But I'm always interested in game development, and the NES has its golden limitations and knacks which I'm still attracted by ... its not impossible.



Super NeSnake 2

After Matrixz passed along the rights to bunnyboy, he did some editing and spruced it up even more. He updated the menu system so it would be faster, and also added the capability of being played on NTSC or PAL machines. The game now includes 4 levels of difficulty as well—easy, medium, hard, and expert. It also has a practice mode so you can improve your skills on the levels you unlock. Bunnyboy also added some new levels into the mix, bringing the total to 25 unlockable levels. Plus as an added feature for you old school guys, he even included the original NeSnake minigame into the same cart for us all to enjoy.

Special Editions

As with all Retrozone exclusively developed games, this one will have 10 special edition carts made. The games will be in a special green snake pouch, and will have a different title screen, label, and manual. Two of them will be given to people who have helped with the game, 3 will be given away in the exclusive NA contest (see below), and the remaining 5 will be sold with no reserve on eBay, so the market sets the price. Level 1 will be personalized for each cart owner, and lights will be behind the snake and strawberry on the carts to make them glow red.

The NA LOLZ at Navi Contest

Don't have the big bucks to throw down to pick up a special edition cart? That is ok because Navi has you covered in this exclusive NA contest. Navi (aka bunnyboy's kitten) has hoarded up 3 special edition carts and wants to give one to you! All you have to do is make



Navi a LOLZ cat. Simply think up the best caption you can for any of the 3 pictures below to win. The three members (one per pic) that can make Mrs. Bunnyboy laugh the hardest will win a special edition cart. All submissions must be in by midnight on June 3rd NA time. The winner will be announced shortly thereafter.

Are you intrigued and want to play this one yet? If so you can download a demo from Retrousb.com now and give the limited 1 player mode a try for free! The demo includes several different levels to try out as well as the same in-game soundtrack. You can download the ROM to play with any NES emulator or for play on your PowerPak. Since I know the free demo won't be enough for you freaks, you can also pick up your copy NOW. They go on sale today, June 1st. You can snag your copy at the low price of \$26 plus S&H. Also included with the green cart game is a manual and a dust sleeve. The game also features the ciclone for PAL and NTSC play. Be sure to check out the other products and homebrews while at RetroZone, and

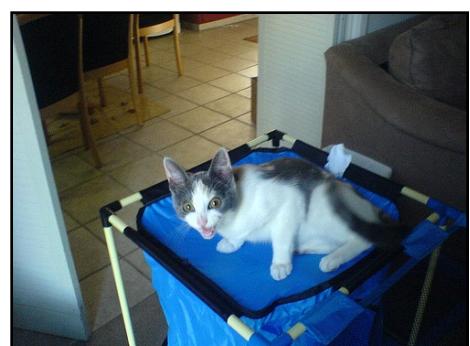
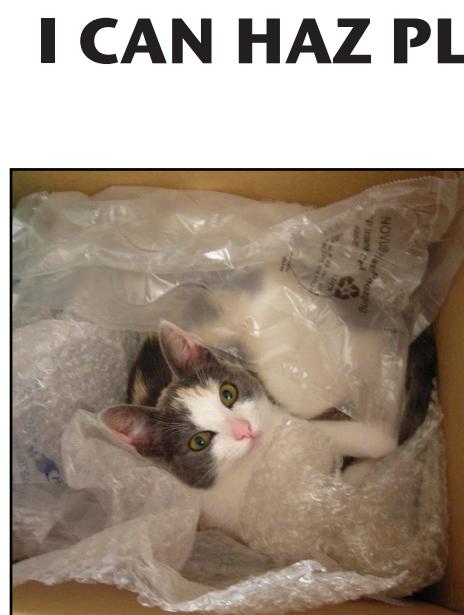
help support growing NES homebrew scene!

MORE Homebrews???

If one new NES Homebrew just wasn't enough to get your blood boiling, then you are in luck my friend! This month Retrozone, in association with Sly Dog Studios, is proud to present Tic-Tac XO in cart form. Our very own bandana wearing freak Roth jacked up his demo and is making it available for us all to enjoy. This has new music, an instructions screen, a



hidden Easter Egg, and an ending screen. It will be available on June 1st at Retrozone.com for purchase for \$22 + shipping, and will NOT have a special edition run. This is the first game Roth has finished up even though he has been dabbling with code for years now. Let us all just hope this is just the first of many of his projects. I for one can't wait to see what else he has in the works. Go pick one up now, freaks!



I CAN HAZ PLACE IN EZINE?

LOLZ



This Month's Member Spotlight: mewithoutYou52

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Let's turn the tables on our very own Kevin Hanley. Kevin has been responsible for the Featured Collector pieces in previous e-zine issues. Now it's his turn to be in the hot seat.

Name: Kevin Hanley

Age: 27

Location: Pensacola, Florida

Blood type: O negative

Occupation: Graphic designer for the Pensacola News Journal. Designs print and online ads.

Describe your collection? My collection consists of 618 common games and two or three semi-rares. Add to it the mix of homebrews and repros for good measure and you'll have a pretty good idea of what I have. And then there's the Yellow Zelda test cart. It's my crown jewel.

What's your favorite underrated game? I love Winter Games very much. The little ski jump guy looks so funny.

Most disappointing game? Zelda 2, it's a good game, but it just doesn't have the same appeal to me.

Big Zelda fan apparently, what's your favorite in the series? Yes, I love everything about it...the whole background story of Hyrule and everything. Seems too cool to me. Favorite? A Link to the Past, probably. The idea of the whole dark world was so cool and mysterious to me. It's all windy and ominous there; freaks me out still.

Best NES memory? Wow, this question is a lot easier to ask than answer... My favorite NES memory would be me playing Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles at my grandparents' house in Ohio. They've both passed on now, so all memories tied to that house are very special. That just happened to be the game in the system at the time I was there.

I do have a really strange memory of going to the video game rental store and being really intrigued by Taboo, because you had to be 18 or older to rent it. I didn't really understand it and tried for years to secretly figure out what the game was about.

Besides being the most handsome guy in the

community, what other roles do you play in the Nintendoage Universe? Right now I'm trying to get as involved as I can. Besides laying out the eZine every month, I recently volunteered to compose the music for Mr. Gimmick's Hellraiser project. I'm hoping to develop my skills in that area so that maybe I can start contributing to more and more of the homebrew games that will be trickling out. It's an exciting time in homebrew.

So I will be volunteering for more and more of those projects. Other than that I have the responsibilities of being a moderator on the forums, so I basically make sure there is no Melrose Place drama going on. And I randomly edit peoples' posts just to screw with them.

Favorite E-zine cover? I think I'll go with the New Year's cover. It was such a simple little party hat, but I think it was very effective. Simple is good.

Last words for all the world? Batty: include me in a poll sometime.



NintendoAGE Price Guide

Editorial by Dan Langevin

This month, returning with a real BANG, the NintendoAGE e-Zine is undergoing one very important change - we're now a free...periodical...e-Zine...and price guide!

Yes, NintendoAGE proudly introduces the official NintendoAGE price guide! Updated monthly, you can bank on these prices being not only up-to-date, but also extremely accurate to the current NES market. All values are derived from historical eBay sales, and are for a loose copy of each game, sold alone. Both eBay auction and store listings have been sampled, and of course the fact that many sellers "hide" item costs in the form of inflated shipping has been taken into account quantitatively. We hope to be the most accurate and useful guide for game-hunters in the wild, people seeking to estimate a fair trade, and resellers.

Great care has been taken to filter out all title-related merchandise, lots, manuals, boxes, and similar titles. Individual human attention has been paid to every single title among the 773 listed here, and rest assured - if a price seems surprising to you - it's accurately based on real market data. Opinion or guesstimation had no part in its creation. Please keep in mind, prices change over time, and this guide merely records

eBay sales from the recent past - it is no indication of more historic sales, or of future performance. But that's the exciting part of a monthly format - we're able to update frequently as the ever-changing marketplace dictates!

Please note a few important things before diving into the guide:

- Aladdin games are for BRAND NEW complete copies. As such, Dizzy the Adventurer's price includes the Aladdin Deck Enhancer itself, since it was only available as a pack-in. Loose copies of these games are virtually never sold.

- Variations of the same title produced/distributed by different companies are recorded, all other variations are ignored.

- Naming conventions: Some abbreviations to titles have been made for the sake of space, in an effort to make this document as useful and portable as possible. For legibility, the word "the" has been removed in most cases, and all roman numerals have been changed to arabic numbers. Celebrity-endorsed games are most often found by the first letter of the celebrity's first name. Finally, the location of a few sequels will be logically out of order with their counterparts (Legend of Zelda, Zoda's Revenge, Super C, Ironsword), and are instead alphabetically located for quick reference in the field by those going purely by the cartridge title.

In future months, look for some exciting additions to the guide, including a column showing the change from the previous month to the current one (is a game heating up, or cooling

off), and "spot frequency" figures to show a dimension of the scarcity of games relative to eBay. Also, this data gives NintendoAGE writers a unique opportunity to reflect on market trends using real up-to-date numbers and trends, so expect some material involving deep market analysis as the year progresses.

Best of all, it's FREE! This price guide is, and will remain, free to all members of NintendoAGE, so long as our wonderful e-Zine continues to be published. Speaking of which, send in some articles (related, or unrelated to 'the Biz') so that we can keep doing this each month! Please also keep in mind, that although we distribute this information freely, this price guide and the data contained herein is copyrighted material, and is for your personal use only. Mirroring, reproduction or harvesting of our data in any way, for any purpose other than to keep a hard copy for your own use, is not permitted.

Finally, an opportunity to all those who seek to do a little NES-related commerce. Are you looking to promote something - to generate some business for yourself? We're making prime advertisement space available in-line with the price guide. Have your service or product seen again and again in our free, value-added format by our almost 1,000 dedicated members! You can't ask for a more targeted, captive audience who will literally print your ad out and bring it with them when hunting for NES in the wild! Whether resale, repro, repair or reWHAT-EVER, it's an affordable and effective marketing option. Contact editor@nintendoage.com for details!

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>>> September 6, 2008

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June 2008

PRICE GUIDE

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Title	Price	Title	Price	Title	Price
3-D World Runner	4	Baseball Simulator 1.000	4	Bugs Bunny B'day Blowout	5
10 Yard Fight	3	Baseball Stars	9	Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle	6
720	4	Baseball Stars 2	12	Bump 'N Jump	4
1942	8	Bases Loaded	3	Burai Fighter	5
1943	7	Bases Loaded 2	3	Burgertime	8
8 Eyes	3	Bases Loaded 3	3	Cabal	4
Abadox	3	Bases Loaded 4	14	Caesar's Palace	3
Action 52	63	Batman	4	California Games	6
AD&D Dragonstrike	14	Batman Return of the Joker	8	Caltron 6 in 1	200
AD&D Heroes of the Lance	6	Batman Returns	5	Captain America	8
AD&D Hillsfar	14	Battle Chess	4	Captain Comic	5
AD&D Pool of Radiance	10	Battle of Olympus	4	Captain Planet	5
Addams Family	6	Battleship	7	Captain Skyhawk	3
Adventure Island	9	Battletank	3	Casino Kid	3
Adventure Island 2	11	Battletoads	11	Casino Kid 2	15
Adventure Island 3	18	Battletoads & Double Dragon	16	Castelian	4
After Burner	4	Bayou Billy	3	Castle of Deceit	40
Air Fortress	3	Bee 52	7	Castle of Dragon	4
Airwolf	3	Beetlejuice	5	Castlequest	3
Al Unser Jr's Turbo Racing	3	Best of the Best	6	Castlevania	9
Alfred Chicken	15	Bible Adventures	8	Castlevania 2	6
Alien 3	7	Bible Buffet	23	Castlevania 3	12
Alien Syndrome	4	Big Bird's Hide & Speek	4	Caveman Games	7
All Pro Basketball	2	Big Foot	4	Challenge of the Dragon	45
Alpha Mission	3	Big Nose Freaks Out	19	Championship Bowling	3
Amagon	3	Big Nose Freaks Out (Aladdin)	15	Championship Pool	9
American Gladiators	6	Big Nose the Caveman	8	Cheetahmen 2	400
Anticipation	3	Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure	5	Chessmaster	3
Arch Rivals	3	Bill Elliot's NASCAR Challenge	4	Chiller	25
Archon	5	Bionic Commando	6	Chip N' Dale Resc. Rangers	7
Arkanoid	9	Black Bass	6	Chip N' Dale Resc. Rangers 2	36
Arkista's Ring	7	Blackjack	19	Chubby Cherub	9
Astyanax	3	Blades of Steel	4	Circus Caper	2
Athena	3	Blaster Master	4	City Connection	4
Athletic World	5	Blue Marlin	8	Clash-at-Demonhead	3
Attack of the Killer Tomatoes	7	Blues Brothers	10	Classic Concentration	8
Baby Boomer	29	Bo Jackson Baseball	4	Cliffhanger	8
Back to the Future	4	Bomberman	8	Clu Clu Land	4
Back to the Future 2 & 3	5	Bomberman 2	25	Cobra Command	3
Bad Dudes	3	Bonk's Adventure	46	Cobra Triangle	3
Bad News Baseball	6	Boulder Dash	6	Codename: Viper	3
Bad Street Brawler	3	Boy and His Blob, A	4	Color A Dinosaur	10
Balloon Fight	7	Break Time	5	Commando	4
Bandit Kings of Ancient China	30	Breakthru	4	Conan	9
Barbie	5	Bubble Bath Babes	no sales	Conflict	9
Bard's Tale	7	Bubble Bobble	15	Conquest of Crystal Palace	4
Base Wars	5	Bubble Bobble 2	110	Contra	17
Baseball	3	Bucky O'Hare	10	Contra Force	40



Cool World	6	Dragon Warrior 2	18	Gauntlet (unlicensed)	3
Cowboy Kid	23	Dragon Warrior 3	30	Gauntlet 2	4
Crash a/t Boys St. Challenge	8	Dragon Warrior 4	42	Gemfire	20
Crash Dummies, Incredible	6	Dragon's Lair	6	Genghis Kahn	7
Crystal Mines	10	Duck Hunt	4	George Foreman KO Boxing	4
Crystallis	6	Duck Tales	7	Ghost Lion	9
Cyberball	4	Duck Tales 2	24	Ghostbusters	6
Cybernoid	3	Dudes with Attitude	3	Ghostbusters 2	4
Dance Aerobics	5	Dungeon Magic	4	Ghosts 'N Goblins	5
Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat	8	Dusty Diamond's All Star Softball	36	Ghoul School	5
Darkman	4	Dyno Warz	3	Gilligan's Island	7
Darkwing Duck	9	Elevator Action	5	Goal!	2
Dash Galaxy	3	Eliminator Boat Duel	7	Goal! 2	7
DayDreamin' Davey	4	Empire Strikes Back	9	Godzilla	4
Days of Thunder	3	Everet/Lendel Top Player's Tennis	3	Godzilla 2	23
Deadly Towers	3	Excitebike	7	Gold Medal Challenge	5
Death Race	17	Exodus	7	Golf	3
Deathbots	7	F-117a Stealth	4	Golf Challenge Pebble Beach	2

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Defender 2	3	F-15 City War	4	Golf Grand Slam	3
Defender of the Crown	3	F-15 Strike Eagle	3	Golgo 13: Top Secret Episode	3
Defenders of Dynatron City	5	Family Feud	10	Goonies 2	3
Déjà Vu	5	Fantastic Adv. Dizzy (Aladdin)	15	Gotcha!	3
Demon Sword	3	Fantastic Adventures of Dizzy	6	Gradius	4
Desert Commander	3	Fantasy Zone	5	Great Waldo Search	9
Destination Earthstar	2	Faria	23	Greg Norman's Golf Power	3
Destiny of an Emperor	9	Faxanadu	3	Gremlins 2	4
Dick Tracy	3	Felix the Cat	9	Guardian Legend	3
Die Hard	17	Ferrari Grand Prix	3	Guerilla War	5
Dig Dug 2	4	Fester's Quest	2	Gumshoe	5
Digger T. Rock	4	Final Fantasy	13	Gun Nac	15
Dino Riki	3	Fire and Ice	33	Gunsmoke	7
Dirty Harry	4	Fire Hawk	6	Gyromite	3
Disney Adv. Magic Kingdom	4	Fisher Price Firehouse Rescue	4	Gyruss	3
Dizzy: Adventurer (Aladdin)	24	Fisher Price I Can Remember	4	Harlem Globetrotters	4
Donkey Kong	10	Fisher Price Perfect Fit	3	Hatriss	9
Donkey Kong Jr.	12	Fist of the North Star	5	Heavy Barrel	4
Donkey Kong 3	11	Flight of the Intruder	6	Heavy Shreddin'	3
Donkey-Kong Classics	10	Flintstones	7	High Speed	4
Donkey Kong Jr. Math	14	Flintstones 2 Surprise Dino Peak	185	Hogan's Alley	4
Double Dare	9	Flying Dragon	2	Hollywood Squares	4
Double Dragon	8	Flying Warriors	2	Home Alone	4
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Rockin' Kats Review

Article by Ross Burdge

Well, here we go with my first e-Zine article. With the great Wiz out of commission for a little while I figured I could help the e-Zine by attempting to fill his very large and funktiforous shoes. The Wizard has sent me a list of a few games he recommended to review, and I just so happened to own a few of them. In fact, I recently bought a "factory sealed" copy of Rockin' Kats that arrived a few days ago. I happened to take a chance on one of our sellers in the "Hall of Shame" because this was so cheap for a sealed game, and of course it arrived in less than desired condition with a big tear through the front of the cellophane. So, I killed 2 birds with one stone, filing the information into the aforementioned Wiz's sealed contents thread, and getting to play a pretty fun game to review for my first article.

Enough of this chitchat, let's get this show on the road.

Game Play: I have to say that I was pleasantly surprised with the level of gameplay you get out of this seemingly juvenile game. Think of it this way... Rygar with Bionic Commando's ability to grapple (or Bionic Commando with Rygar's ability to jump!) and Scrooge Mc-Duck's ability to bounce, with multiple levels, or channels, similar to Mega Man, except that each channel is almost like its own game. You save the girl at the end of each one (or at least each one I played through all the way). Oh, and you are a Cat fighting Dogs...

My favorite part of this game is definitely



the Punchgun. It can be used as a weapon, a sort of pogo stick, and a grappling hook. It swings out in 8 different directions and can be used to attack in any of them, bounce in 5 of them, and grapple in the upper three directions. It is a very cool tool. There are also some other pretty nifty items that can be used throughout the game to increase the potential of your Punchgun and a few fun little minigames, featured as bonus channels. There is a very annoying password system with upper and lower case consonants, numbers 0-9, and a bunch of different symbols that can get kind of confusing when copying them down.

Graphics: Like many (but not all) of the late released NES library the graphics on this game are pretty damn good for an 8-bit machine. The colors are vibrant and although the detail on some of the characters is a little sloppy, they are still quite good for the NES. A lot of the backgrounds remind me of games like Who Framed Roger Rabbit and Bart vs. The Space Mutants.

Look Familiar? It should!

Sound: Overall the sound for this game is pretty good. The music at times gets a little slow, but other times I found myself tapping my toes along with it. Sound effects are decent with a pretty quality punching sound from the Punchgun, but every enemy you hit has the same odd sound that sounds nothing like a dog being punched.

Overall: I would consider this game to not only be a very playable game, but it can be very enjoyable. The Punchgun is a marvelous tool that you keep finding new ways to use throughout the game. This game has elements of some of the best NES titles, and I think it pulls them together rather nicely. If you haven't had a chance to play this title, I would definitely recommend you go pick it up. I know it can cost a bit more than most games, but it is worth the extra coinage.



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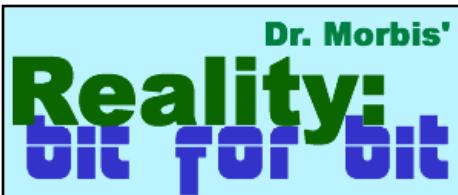
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C64: Surprise! It's Fun

Article by Basil Timmins

Tell me now; what are the two greatest 8 bit systems of all time? Since you're a member of NintendoAGE, I can only assume that naming the NES as one of the two is a given, but then what would come next? What would the other one be? I'm sure you've got a favorite, but I'm here to tell you quite frankly that whatever your answer – it's wrong! You see, the other contender for the title of "Best 8-Bit Gaming Machine of All-Time" belongs to a computer, and that computer is the C64 (Commodore 64). I own the system myself, and like the NES there is something just magical... and something a little bit strange. In particular, I have been noticing odd happenings with regards to those games that were released on both systems. You'd think it would be simple: the good games are good and the bad ones are bad, right? Well, not entirely; consider the titles I've outlined below and you'll see what I mean when I contend that there is something amiss...

First up: *Conan*. Have you ever played Conan on the NES? Admittedly, it's not very fun. In fact, other than my friend Mike (the_wizard_666 here on NA) I have yet to meet a guy who enjoys it. Well here's the funny part: on the C64 this game is called "Myth: History in the Making," and it is considered to be the cream of the crop – seriously. It's in the top 100 games over at Lemon64.com (think NA but for the C64) and as far as cartridge games go, for play value it's regarded as a strong #1. Very odd considering it's THE EXACT SAME GAME as Conan on the NES, but without the random big-name license to carry it. And so one must wonder, how can one community of gamers put a game on a pedestal while the other one turns up its nose? Well just hold on, for the plot's about

to thicken...

Silent Service. Yes, *that* game. Now this one embodies the very essence of how backwards this situation can be. The NES cart is crap; you can't give it away, yet on Lemon it's a "Gold Star" Top 100 rated game with a rating of 8.2! Figure that one out! Are NES gamers just missing the point? I've tried both versions myself and can't really get into either as it just isn't my cup of tea, though they don't seem all that different to me. But I guess that's the point, I was raised on the NES so I don't have the patience to simulate being inside a "real" 8-bit sub in my mind. But wait; it gets worse...

Bad Street Brawler. Pheww... you've surely heard of this one, and as funny as it is, the play control on the NES version is abominable. Well guess what? On the C64 it was released under two different titles ("Bop'N Rumble" was the other one) and it's quite highly regarded as far as beat'em ups go – yes, you read that right; it's highly regarded on the C64! But how can that be when it's essentially the same game? I surely don't know, but whatever it is must be completely intangible because I've played the C64 version myself and can confirm that, indeed, the game's a whole lot more fun (you get to beat up old grannies in that one on top of the gorillas et al). Moving right along though, we get...

Platoon, Overlord, Defender of the Crown, Ikari Warriors – the list goes on. Panned NES bargain-bin titles that elicit comments like "incredible!" and "what atmosphere!" on the C64. Some just had poor ports, suffering from play control, graphics and other technical issues. But still, more great examples of the inter-console flip-flop between what's seen as treasure and what's viewed as intolerable trash.

Of course, there are some games that are very highly regarded on both systems like *Maniac Mansion, Bubble Bobble*, and so many many more, but I still find the phenomenon that I've outlined here strange – like the C64 is some sort of bizarro-land NES. They can't all have been ported poorly – the NES was a solid system, and that explanation doesn't really go all that far in accounting for this over-arching trend. I think it has more to do with each system's style of gam-

er and the expectations he had going in. NES gamers (generally) want to hop and bop their way through cartoony and colorful fast-scrolling worlds whereas C64 guys are a little more serious. I mean come on, if you're hell-bent on dedicating a lot of your free time to learning about the subtle nuances of a game like *Silent Service*, you have got to be pretty damn serious! Though, that's not to discount the C64



or its library of games.

Actually, that's what's so sad about the C64: most people that get back into the classics will miss it or skip it because it's not a "true" console but an ancient computer, and that really is a shame. Sure, most open-minded retro gamers will eventually discover the Intellivision, the ColecoVision, and the original Atari, but I'd bet that 49 out of every 50 won't ever delve into the venerable old C64, which is doubly strange when you consider that it has the largest game library known to man. The thing sold like gang-busters...it's out there, easy to find, so what's the holdup? It has to be the computer mindset: "Eh gads! I'll need monitors and disk drives and cables galore!" Well, the fact is, that's not entirely true; the C64 is just like any other old console really, and using one for gaming is as simple as can be: it has a standard RF-out for hooking up to a TV, a cartridge slot for games, and it takes standard Atari 2600 controllers for input – it really is as simple as "plug in and play." And you REALLY can't go wrong with a library of over 15,000 games (of which the cartridge games alone number more than INTV, ColecoVision and pretty much all other pre-crash libraries, save for the 2600). So what is it that's scaring all the newcomers off? I guess the dreaded keyboard might have something to do with it; nothing screams "gaming" like a poo-colored keyboard...

Anyway, if you're into this hobby at all for the gaming, you need to look into the C64. Trust me.. Just keep your eyes open, and the next time you see a dirty old breadbox C64 on your rounds at the neighbourhood flea market, pick it up! Its "bizarre" selection of games will make an excellent compliment to your much-adored dirty old NES...





The Zelda Test Cartridge

Article by Otto Hanson

Out of all the Authorized Service Center items that have surfaced, it can easily be argued that none have been more controversial and desirable than the Legend of Zelda test cartridge. Because of all the hype and mystique surrounding its existence, it has become one of, if not the most, expensive pieces of test equipment one can purchase in today's market. Although infrequently up for auction on eBay, they command a strong price if properly listed...one Zelda test cart openly auctioned on eBay sold for just over \$600 only a few months back. I have done a large amount of research into how these sought-after cartridges found their way into the hands of individual collectors, and while a good number have simply purchased them off of eBay, some of the stories are quite interesting indeed.

In August 2005, a collector that went by the username 'Alm0stFinished' wound up finding three of these Zelda cartridges at a flea market for \$10 each. He almost missed out on this great find because he decided to leave them and go



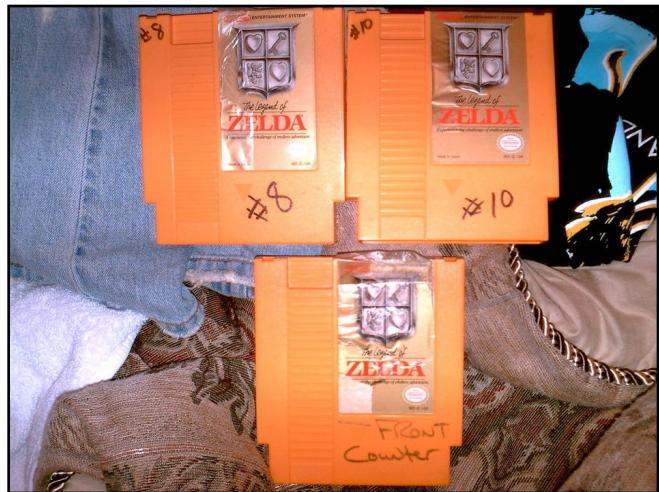
Limbofunk (14)

home to check online to see if he could find any information on them. His searches came up dry, but he went back and purchased them anyhow. The labels on all three cartridges weren't in the greatest condition; suffering from what looked to be some sort of heat damage. At this point in time, the only forum he was a member of was gametz, so he posted his amazing discovery there. Unfortunately, no one there knew what they were...a few other users came to the consensus that these three games must be pirated versions and thus were maybe worth the \$10 he had paid for each of them. Thankfully, a collector that went by the alias of pa_nes_ian (who has since moved on from NES collecting) happened to see the post and told him what they really were.

Pa-nes-ian purchased one of the copies, gave Alm0st two replacement labels he personally printed up for the cartridges, then directed him to NES-world where he could show off the find, and take proper credit for his discovery. He tried to sell one of the two remaining copies for \$120, but no one wanted to purchase it at that price (most likely because of the issues with the label), so he placed an auction on ebay which was promptly shut down as it violated ebay's listing policy. Shortly after, the cartridge was sold/traded to NESAholic for \$100 and a handful of PAL exclusive titles. The third copy still re-

mains in his possession, but pan_nes_ian eventually resold his copy to Michael242 when he decided to stop collecting NES games.

Of course, with NES collecting at an all-time peak (both in the number of collectors, and in price!), dozens more Zelda test cartridges have appeared and sold for a wide range of prices. As recently as 2008, though, the market has proven that people generally don't know what this game is worth, with one being sold, improperly listed, for a budget-rate to our e-Zine designer MeWithoutYou52 in a large lot, and another going to editor-in-chief Dangevin for a once-in-a-lifetime \$15 Buy-it-Now on eBay. Indeed, this particular test cartridge seems to be one of the most common among its ilk, although arguably its high profile may draw more copies out to market than the inauspicious, yet overwhelmingly scarcer Duck Hunt test cartridge.



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